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271112Z May 04

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 002083

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THE HAGUE FOR CWC DEL; STATE FOR AC/CB ROBERT MIKULAK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/27/2014

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SUBJECT: OPCW AMBASSADOR JAVITS DISCUSSES RANGE OF ISSUES
WITH ITALIAN OFFICIALS

REF: ROME 1853

Classified By: POLITICAL MILITARY COUNSELOR GARY ROBBINS
FOR REASONS 1.5(B)(D)

1. (C) Summary. OPCW Ambassador Eric Javits discussed Italy's concerns over the timing of converting Libya's Rabta Chemical Weapons production facility, the Working Capital Fund, the OPCW budget format and universality with Italian officials in Rome on May 10. End Summary.

RABTA

2. (C) Ambassador Antonio Catalano, MFA Coordinator for International Security Policy, questioned the timing for the conversion of Libya's Rabta CW facility under Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) provisions. Amb. Javits explained that the earliest conversion could occur is following action by the Conference of States Parties (CSP) at its next session on November 29-December 3. The US favors a two-step approach to Rabta conversion that would eliminate Libya's CW production capability in a timely manner, he said. The first step is for the Executive Council to consider a plan for destruction and verification at the June 29-July 2 meeting. EC-38 (12-15 October) could then recommend that the CSP adopt the conversion formalities agreed to by Libya and the Technical Secretariat (TS) along with a technical fix to paragraph 72 at its early December session. Amb. Javits explained that the CSP would be reluctant to approve a blanket approval so broad that it would cede away its power to scrutinize individual cases in the future, and is more likely to approve the revision to paragraph 72 if the change is Libya specific. With good coordination between the TS and WEOG, and with Libya, the proposed change is very likely to be approved, he predicted, in part because it bolsters the universality concept.

3. (C) Amb. Catalano questioned whether a six-month time frame is realistic for conversion. Amb. Javits clarified that the US wants to achieve OPCW approval of the Libyan request for conversion of Rabta as soon as possible, but expects the plant will be under inspection for several years.

WORKING CAPITAL FUND

4. (C) Amb. Javits raised Italy's resistance to increasing the OPCW Working Capital Fund to a 9.9 million Euro level. He stressed the important role the fund plays in allowing the OPCW to meet financial goals. General Tracchi, an MOD CW expert seconded to the MFA, said that Italy wants the funds to be available to pay reimbursement costs and cover emergencies. Italy has been against the proposal for eight years, Tracchi said, because of the political consequences of such an increase. Amb. Javits countered that the fund should be used to prevent emergencies as well as respond to them. The issue is a financial one, he stressed, tied to the fact that certain countries won't pay their dues this year, or will have questions about vouchers that delay payment, or have different fiscal years. There is no surety about when funds will come in or how much. Meanwhile, inspections and verifications continue and scientists must be paid, he noted. It would be irresponsible to stop industrial inspections because the organization is short of funds. The US is trying to ensure that the OPCW develops in a fiscally responsible manner by proposing the increase in the Working Capital Fund, he explained. No separate assessments or contributions are required. Amb. Javits urged the Italians to support raising the level to 9.9 as a protection against the possibility of having to cut programs.

BUDGET FORMAT

5. (C) Amb. Javits noted that some States Parties remain skeptical of the new RBB format for the OPCW budget. The 2005 budget was distributed only in the RBB format to begin to familiarize members with the new approach. A conventional

version will be distributed in June. The US supports the RBB format and would like to see it adopted this year or for next year's budget, he said. Tracchi agreed, but said the conventional system should remain available while members adjusted to the new format.

HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT

16. (C) Amb. Javits asked Giovanni Iannuzzi, head of Italy's National CWC Authority, for an update on the HCA. Iannuzzi said full clearance is very close (see reftel) and they have requested full signatory authority on behalf of Italy. He asked whether the Ambassador to Italy will sign for the US. Once executed, the HCA will go to parliament for ratification, he explained.

UNIVERSALITY

17. (C) The US expects significant efforts on universality from the TS, Amb. Javits told the Italians. Preparations for Malta were disappointing, despite discussions last November. It takes six months for States Parties to do the political campaigning needed to gain support. The recent UN mandate (1540) is a boost, but OPCW needs an action plan for meeting targets so countries will participate and do the necessary, he said. Catalano suggested pressing for reporting to the Security Council, rather than just compliance with OPCW. Italy plans to work through the EU Nonproliferation Strategy as well as bilaterally, he added.

18. (C) Iannuzzi said that Italy is working to establish a clear rule on the OPCW tenure policy and welcomed the decision to require non-career employment in the organization. Financial constraints have prevented the Secretary from fully implementing the new policy but progress

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is being made, he noted. Beyond the financial constraints, he stressed that it is important to keep to the seven year rule. Once it is clear the new rule can't be circumvented, it will be easier to implement it, he said. Italy hopes for more representation on the TS staff, commensurate with its role as the sixth largest contributor to the OPCW budget, he said. Amb. Javits responded that the US focus is on competency; OPCW should hire the most qualified candidates, and urged Italy to seek to find and offer the most qualified candidates it could.

19. (U) Ambassador Javits has cleared this cable.

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